

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TIMES EDITORIAL COMMENT ON REACTOR CHOICE

REF: LONDON A-526, JUNE 12, 1974

1. AS A FOLLOW-UP TO ITS FRONT PAGE NEWS TREATMENT OF SPECULATION REGARDING THE U.K. NUCLEAR REACTOR DECISION WHICH RAISED HEADLINED QUESTIONS ABOUT U.S. LIGHT WATER REACTOR SAFETY (REFTEL), THE TIMES OF JULY 2 PUBLISHED AN EDITORIAL WHICH COMES DOWN IN FAVOR OF LWR'S ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE SYSTEM IS TECHNOLOGICALLY PROVEN. NOTING THE PROBABLE NEED FOR ADDED POWER GENERATION CAPACITY, DESPITE UNCERTAINTIES, THE INCREASED COST OF FOSSIL FUELS, AND THE PROBLEMS WITH GAS COOLED REACTORS, THE TIMES COMMENTS THAT "THE GOVERNMENT MUST DECIDE IN FAVOR OF EXISTING AND PROVEN TECHNOLOGY AND THE SIREN VOICES OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHALLENGE, WHICH LED TO SO MANY WRONG DECISION IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD, MUST BE RE-SISTED".

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2. ERRATUM: ALTHOUGH THE TIMES HAS PUBLISHED ARTICLES

TENDING TO PUT LWR'S IN A DISADVANTAGEOUS POSITION, WE SHOULD HAVE NOTED IN REFTEL THAT IT IS THE FINANCIAL TIMES WHICH HAS BEEN MORE CONSISTENTLY NEGATIVE ON THIS QUESTION. THE TIMES PREVIOUSLY HAS TENDED TO TAKE AN EDITORIAL STANCE SIMILAR TO THE ONE SUMMARIZED ABOVE AND, PRIOR TO THE JULY 1 ARTICLE, TO PUBLISH MORE BALANCED NEWS ANALYSES OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE DEBATE ON REACTOR DESIGN.
ANNENBERG

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